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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

Central Intelligence Bulletin

State Dept. review completed

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26 October 1970

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Approved For Release 2003/10/01 : CIA-RDP79T00975A017400100001-7

Approved For Release 2003/10/01 : CIA-RDP79T00975A017400100001-7

No. 0256/70
26 October 1970

Central Intelligence Bulletin

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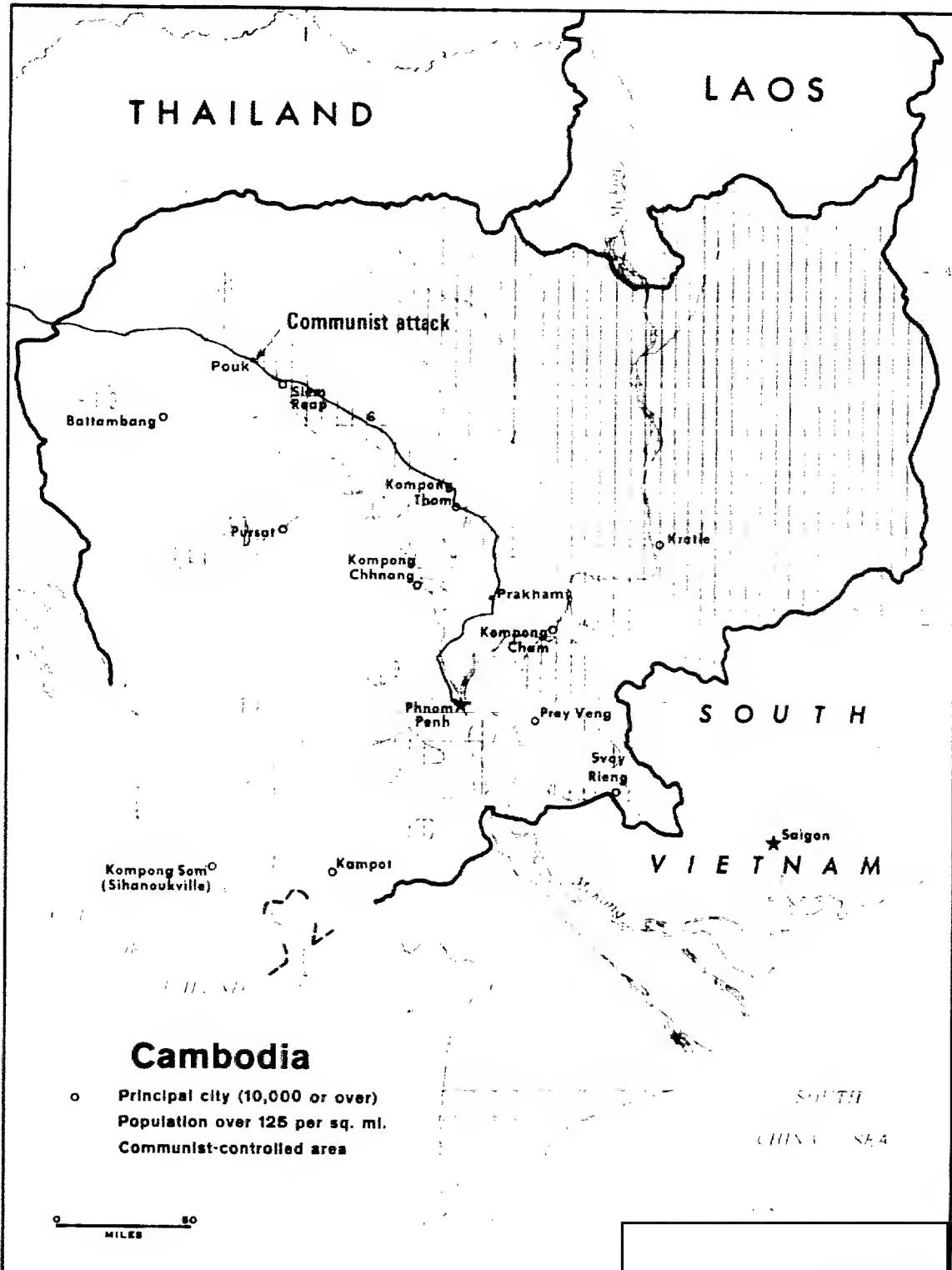
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Current Situation



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CAMBODIA: Military activity remained at a low level over the weekend as both sides appear more concerned with preparations for future operations.

The only significant fighting was near Siem Reap city, where Communist forces again attacked Cambodian units dug in along Route 6 near the village of Pouk. The continuing pressure in this area might be designed to screen enemy movements south into Battambang Province.

There is some additional evidence that while the Communists' short-term priorities have shifted from South Vietnam to Cambodia, they do not foresee an early showdown there. A low-ranking COSVN official has recently told US interrogators that a tightly-held portion of a new COSVN directive states that it would be "easy" to overthrow the Lon Nol government by military means, but that the Communist movement in Cambodia is not strong enough to form an effective or lasting government. Vietnamese Communist elements, therefore, are forced to help the Cambodians organize already liberated areas. The directive, numbered 20 and issued in August, indicates that additional assets will be taken out of South Vietnam for work in Cambodia and that some of the responsibility for the effort in South Vietnam will be transferred to local commanders.

The Communist official said that programs for the implementation of this directive were scheduled to be worked out at a COSVN meeting in Kratie Province in late August. He heard that, among other things, three new Communist military regions--numbered 10, 20, and 30--would be organized in Cambodia. The official was unable to provide concrete information on Communist military plans for the upcoming dry season, but some portions of Directive 20 clearly suggest that increased military pressure--particularly against ARVN forces--is in the cards.

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Over the opposition of the regime's hardliners, party boss Gustav Husak apparently has vetoed political trials.

The editor of the party daily Rude Pravo, Miroslav Moc, reportedly has said that there will be no political trials, even of the strongly pro-Dubcek Pachman group, which was scheduled to have begun last week. According to Moc, the regime wishes to avoid creating martyrs. Moc's statement followed reports that the last two members of the Pachman group have been released from custody. Pachman also was reported to have been transferred from a criminal to a civilian hospital.

The US Embassy in Prague cautions reserve in accepting reports of the off again - on again trial. It notes, however, that the "categorical" statement of a high government official, coupled with [redacted] [redacted] the release of the last two defendants, suggests a firm decision may have been made this time.

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The decision on the trial comes at the same time as the official announcement of the removal of hardliner Josef Groessner as Czech state interior minister. Groessner, a supporter of strong measures against the liberal activists of 1968, was replaced with a virtually unknown party functionary, Josef Jung.

It is doubtful that Husak, who has been vulnerable to criticism by the party's left wing, would have attempted the reported moves unless he felt relatively secure in his position. If Husak can continue to weaken the position of his hard-line opponents, prospects for the success of his moderate course will improve significantly. [redacted]

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GUATEMALA: [redacted]

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[redacted] An explosion this week at the home of the president of congress probably was set off by the FAR.

Violence has continued through the month at a fairly high level. Mysterious disappearances and the murders of students and other persons associated with the left have been occurring. These developments suggest that the security forces--which are in the process of reorganizing and are awaiting congressional action on emergency powers to counter the terrorism--may be using interim extralegal tactics to retaliate against FAR activities. [redacted]

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Some military discontent with President Arana's apparent inaction against the terrorists is becoming evident. Most of the recent FAR actions have been against policemen and other low-paid security officials. A more spectacular target, such as a high government official or foreign diplomat, would generate serious tension and place the administration in a difficult political position. [redacted]

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SURINAM: Racial tensions are continuing to rise, and Minister-President Sedney may have difficulty staying in power.

Sedney, who is a Creole (Negro) but leads an East Indian - dominated coalition, has postponed a visit to the UN in order to deal with a strike of secondary school teachers that began on 15 October. The strike, called over the replacement of a Creole supervisor by an East Indian, has heightened the racial antagonisms between the two groups. Sedney has threatened to charge the teachers with striking illegally and to impose heavy fines and prison sentences if the strike is not settled immediately.

The dispute, similar to the one that helped bring down the government last year, has provided a focus for uniting the opposition forces. There seems to be a growing conviction among the Creoles that the East Indians, who control the power structure, are intentionally ignoring Creole interests.

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NOTES

CHILE: Congress has elected Marxist Salvador Allende as president. The run-off vote took place under strict security measures and in an atmosphere of absolute calm. Meanwhile, a major effort is under way to apprehend those involved in the murder of army commander General Schneider. Several dozen arrests have been made but the chief investigator believes the full ramifications of the plot, which appears to have been of right-wing origin, will not be fully determined for some months.

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HUNGARY - WEST GERMANY: The Hungarian Government has informally conveyed to the West Germans its intention to be positive about establishing diplomatic relations, but avoided specific commitments on timing. During an unpublicized visit to Budapest by a ranking Bonn Foreign Ministry official last week, the Hungarians said that they would move toward recognition but final agreement would depend on Bonn's ratification of the Soviet - West German renunciation-of-force agreement and normalization of relations with Poland and Czechoslovakia. The fact that Budapest did not raise East German interests in its presentation, demonstrates Hungarian confidence that Pankow will not be able to block recognition if the other pieces fall into place. Next week the Hungarians will receive yet another West German guest, former CDU foreign minister Gerhard Schroeder, and they will probably try to influence favorably the CDU position toward Brandt's Ostpolitik.

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